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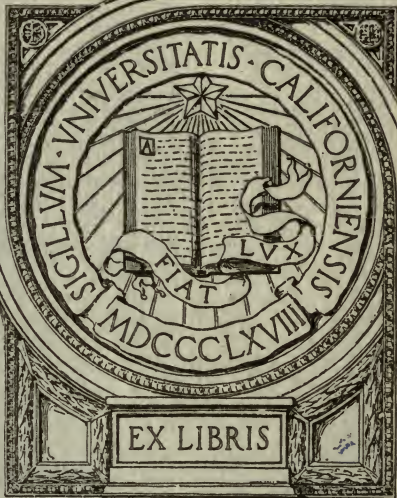
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# How "Reason - Why" Copy Dried Up a County

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## How "Reason-Why" Copy Dried Up a County.

*Reprinted from "Judicious Advertising"*

Many are the uses of good advertising creating appetites and thirsts, but simon-pure "reason why" copy had a new workout a few weeks ago in Lenawee County, Michigan—in which it turned the trick with the biggest "dry" majority in Michigan.

The copy writer first laid out plans for a beautiful "human interest" campaign that would bring sobs from a murderer, but his "dry" ideals were badly spilled on finding that the voters were talking against local option rule on the basis of the possibility of higher taxes.

So taking a new tack and getting right down to the commercial aspect of the thing, a campaign which led off with a talk of rule by outside "booze barons," followed by actual facts and figures showing how taxes are really cut down by the elimination of saloons, was decided upon.

The first ad of the two weeks' campaign of "reason why" copy had for its keynote "shall the whiskey machine of the United States rule Lenawee County—and you?"

For an entire week the cloud, which prevented voters from looking at the sentimental side of the question, was hammered away at facts and figures, even United States government reports being brought into play.

It was necessary to lift the cloud of commercialism, in a measure, selfishness, which was keeping the sentimental side in the dark.

The copy writer realized that the moral phase of the situation was bound to turn the trick, if six weeks hard pounding of "grass growing in the streets," "higher taxes" and "Sahara" arguments by the "wet" campaign manager could be overcome in the short space of a week. Page and half-page newspaper copy was used.

So an information bureau was established at the local option headquarters and every piece of copy that went out to the two daily papers and fifteen weeklies and semi-weeklies carried a coupon, called the "free information coupon." Voters were asked to write upon the ten lines in the two-column coupon any questions which were not quite clear in their minds and they would be impartially answered, no matter what the result. Whether the reader's inclinations were "wet" or "dry" he was asked to submit his doubt, no matter what its nature, to the information bureau.

This gave a splendid opportunity to get "under their skins," talk to them by the hour with "dry" arguments upon the very questions upon which their votes depended. It also gave a good resume, based on the law of averages, of what was nearest to the voters' hearts—what to talk to them about.

Its working was beautifully illustrated in the case of a wealthy young man, of considerable influence in a very "wet" section of the county. As was usual, the letter was turned over to a member of the anti-saloon organization acquainted with the sender of the coupon, and was answered in every phase, with the result that return mail

brought the significance that his vote would be "dry" and enclosed was a contribution to the anti-saloon league's campaign.

The copy writer attempted to hook up the business aspect to the anti-saloon league copy as strongly as was possible under the circumstances, his reasoning being that a voter naturally expected the church and ministers to be "dry"; consequently when the arguments were advanced by "we business men who are backing the fight against the open saloon," they carried considerable weight, for the business men, naturally looked upon the side most helpful to the county generally.

An attempt was made to form a business men's association to stand for the "dry" side, but in view of the fact that even the business men, who themselves were lending some backing to the campaign, refused to come out into the open, because of the fear that the election might go "wet," the effort was abandoned.

So the strongest business backing which could be given in the copy was that of "we business men who are backing up this campaign." Even that took the "wets" by surprise and while they were said to have had a business men's association behind them, they failed to make any effort to counteract the apparent results of the coup.

The copy writer in the first two days of the campaign corrected the mistake of talking to the voter in the third person. On the third day of the campaign, the copy which went to the papers completely merged the interests of the men behind the league and



the voters and made the play that "we"—the voter and the league—were fighting a common enemy, the "outside whiskey machine" had a noticeable effect—simply a bit of psychology that worked out to the desired end.

"Arthur Brisbane type," 8 point bold-face, said to be the most easily read type in the world was pitted against the 8 point Roman of the "wet" campaigners, who ran their ads as reading notices, "which were not read," according to the "dry" copy writer.

The psychology of the "dry" campaign was perfectly worked out in every detail after the first three days of experience began to give the ad-writer the proper grip on the situation.

Nearly all matter was set two column measure in 8 and 10 point boldface, thereby taking advantage of the newspaper's display rates, besides making it three or four times as readable.

Scientists tell us that the human eye can grasp only four short-length words at a single glance. Except for the first day's ads, no more than five words ever composed the "dry" headlines. And these were, for the most part, in very black, heavy Gothic, which made the letters large, because of the six and seven column width of the ads. In the leading county daily the front page was secured upon days when two sections composed the publication.

"One mistake which I believe was made in many 'dry' campaigns," said the "dry" ad-writer, "was that the anti-saloonists

talked too much in their ads on outside examples of the 'dry' regime—not enough on the results or expected results in their own counties. That was a thing which was religiously avoided in the Lenawee campaign's last two weeks. Only such examples as were directly applicable or could be made directly applicable to Lenawee County were utilized in the campaign. As a sidelight on the campaign, the first result of this mode of procedure resulted in the 'wet' campaign manager stating in his ads that 'the clever dry ad-writer is a mental acrobat,' of course, both the 'wet' manager and myself were imported for the election, yet strange as it may seem, the people being fully cognizant of the fact that outsiders were handling the campaigns, they regarded the importation of a man to handle the 'dry' side as progressiveness on the part of the anti-saloonists and the importation of the 'wet' man as an imposition, despite the fact that the latter had been given six weeks' extra time to intrench himself."

Whenever the "dry" cause was referred to in the advertising copy, the anti-saloonists were made to array themselves on the voters' side by continually talking how "WE will be \$1,000,000 richer when Lewanee is dry." Another coup which was sprung was the use of United States government liquor statistics by making them directly applicable to Lenawee County in this manner: by taking the total amount of intoxicating beverages sold in the entire country and dividing by the number of saloons in the United States the average in-



come of each saloon in the country was figured. This multiplied by the number of saloons in Lenawee County gave the total yearly drink bill of the county. This sum was held up to the voters and they were told how, every year, that amount of money was being earned within the county and spent in Lenawee saloons to go outside of the county and do the county no good whatever—it was compared with the cases of Americans making big piles of money in the United States and then taking it across the water to England to spend it.

Naturally enough the “wet” side disputed the fact that every Lenawee County saloon took in \$7,500 a year—the amount which was averaged down from United States government figures. In answer to their statement the entire internal revenue commissioner’s digest report was presented in interesting form, so as to be easily readable and the statement made that there was no reason for believing that the Lenawee saloon was above or below the average—and the warning “not even the outside booze barons can dispute Uncle Sam’s bookkeeping” served to clamp the lid on the “wet” side and brought forth from them only the weak statement that “nobody knows what Lenawee saloons take in.” That nailed their “higher taxes” talk.

At no time during the campaign was there expressed any “if” as to the probable outcome of the campaign. There was another bit of psychology which worked admirably. Every ad carried with the atmosphere of certainty—no bragging that Len-

awee "WOULD go dry"—simply the statements were "WHEN Lenawee goes 'dry' ". Neither did the copy ever carry any threat to the voters if they voted "wet"—the admission was never even made that any of them had the intention of voting anything but "dry" and on that basis the pretty picture of "dry" Lenawee was happily painted for them, so that only the extremely rabid "wets," those who were not by any means the better class of citizens, were able to resist the "dry" picture.

One headline, which with the ad that ran beneath served in a large measure to overcome the "wet's" higher tax threat, was "Lenawee County \$1,000,000 Richer!" It must be remembered that the county is the third richest in the United States and instead of this being a detriment to the "dry" cause, which it might have been if the "wet" manager had utilized the opportunity it proved a boon, for the "dry" ad-writer held up the \$1,000,000 that two "dry" years would leave within the county because of the elimination of the saloon. This was the keynote of that ad: "Let's keep this Million ourselves and not give it away outside the county—let's increase our property valuation by a million," and thus played upon the germ for more which exists underneath the shirt of the man who has accumulated even a little. The \$1,000,000 represented the Lenawee County drink bill for two years.

Another effective mode of showing the voters of the county the alleged injustice of the saloon regime was the comparison of the \$500,000 a year drink bill with the

yearly saloon license \$31,000 for the entire county's saloons. This was done very effectively by a simple comparative illustration, of the drink bill and that part of it which came back to the county. Side by side were placed two solid black columns—one of them was sixteen inches in height and the other one inch in height. The former, as indicated directly beneath it represented Lenawee's drink bill and the latter Lenawee's revenue from the saloon. Then the query was propounded: "Does it pay Lenawee?" This all had the effect of shattering the "wet" manager's talk of how the removal of that \$31,000 was going to work disastrously for the tax-payers. The injustice of the saloon regime, as set forth in the illustration run in every county paper and daily, quickly appealed to a large clique of voters who had been led to believe taxes were surely going up.

Then by a tabulation based upon state, county and United States government figures, the voters were shown just how the elimination of saloons cut down taxes in reality. Lenawee's annual tax was divided up into various departments and figures showed the number of inmates, whose presence in various penal and charitable institutions was caused by drink. By this accurate process of deduction of the money it cost to take care of drunks, saloon-wrecked lives, etc., it was quickly shown that the \$31,000 that the saloons paid was far too small to take care of the wrongs which they inflicted upon the community. This argument, one of the most effective of the en-

tire campaign according to the "dry" copywriter, was tabulated and boxed with a heavy black border and step-head "How 'Dry' Lenawee Cuts Down Your Taxes." It was kept standing throughout the campaign and was used at various intervals when its presence was demanded in the day's ads.

Towards the end of the campaign more money was needed by the Lenawee County Anti-Saloon League. The publicity pace was pretty swift and for four days a plea for more cash, not a begging demand, was made in a straightforward manner under the caption of "News for Lenawee Drys." It brought a flood of dollars with each day's appearance of the three-paragraph plea as part of the regular daily "dry" ad. The result was gratifying, for it showed the effect that the reason-why copy was having upon the "drys" themselves, who thoroughly approved the manner in which the publicity campaign was being handled.

It was planned to make the home stretch of the campaign a pace too hot for even the moneyed "wets" to follow, so the final three days' campaign was laid out, so as to be psychologically perfect.

On Thursday a "landslide" ad was planned. For Friday the first talk of the campaign on "sentiment" was laid out and for Saturday a most daring anti-saloon league feat—one that almost made the Lenawee "drys" afraid of the result—was carefully planned with every thought on the possible comeback from "wet" headquarters. In addition the issuance of an entire daily newspaper

in the interest of the "drys" was scheduled.

Thursday's "landslide" ad, which, as was usual with each of the daily ads appeared in both Adrian daily papers, was captioned "JUMP IN AND WIN!" the four word headline stretching clear across the entire seven columns of the front page of the leading paper.

The talk beneath the caption was aimed directly at the unconvinced voter, yet he was spoken of in the third person—literally "talked about to his face." It was planned with a view to the psychological effect upon the man of "wet" intentions. It was meant to show him that everybody else was going to vote "dry" and he oughtn't to be one of the rank outsiders. The effect desired was to create a "wet" panic, if possible, and bring about a general landslide onto the bandwagon—in fact, a final rush for cover, which it did admirably to no uncertain extent. Following was the talk beneath the headline of the "landslide" ad:

"You VOTERS who are dead certain that the death of the open saloon means a RICHER, a CLEANER Lenawee County—JUMP INTO THE BREACH, BROTHERS, AND WIN!

"The Whiskey Machine is ON THE RUN—BACKWARDS!

"Now is the time to do the HEAVY WORK—with just a few hours remaining—show the FACTS about local option enforcement to at least ONE man—show him how MENTAL, PHYSICAL and FINANCIAL HEALTH invariably follow the end of the saloon in EVERY community—it has

never failed yet—and every lie of the BOOZE BARONS is NAILED by the same mouth that told it!

“You CONVINCED VOTERS far outnumber the UNCONVINCED—now go after them—show them the FACTS—PROVE the TRUTH! We’ve laid all the FACTS before you—and the PROOF—NOW is the time to use them.

“Good Old Lenawee County’s citizens are of the highest class mentally in the United States—they’re VOTING on good, hard, bed rock FACTS—NOT on the liquor trust’s twisted, garbled, half-told calculation. SHOW the UNCONVINCED the LIGHT to RIGHT—and every man YOU reach will Vote “YES” on Monday—and one year from TODAY he’ll thank YOU for the advice.

### **Last Prop Knocked From Under the Booze Barons!**

“At last the WHISKEY MACHINE has FLOPPED—they say “local option is a good thing, but you can’t enforce it.” They say they would be in favor of local option “only it can’t be enforced and the saloons ought to be regulated.”

“BUT they’ve told it to the wrong class of people—they’ve told it to the people whose INTELLIGENCE makes enforcement a CERTAINTY! By telling Lenawee County citizens we can’t enforce local option, they’ve INSULTED our INTELLIGENCE—They’ve accused YOU and US of sneaking into the side door of the “blind pig” that the whiskey machine openly accuses itself of intending to establish!



"And thanks to an upright community there are not sneakers enough in Good Old Lenawee to conspire with and support the whiskey machine's "blind pig" for a minute! That's why there will be no blind pig in Lenawee!"

As will be noted from the above, a strong play was made upon the vanity side and the way was paved for enforcement of the law if the county went "dry."

In order that the "wets" might get no wind of the proposed coup, the issuance of a newspaper was not decided upon until five o'clock Thursday afternoon. The paper was regular seven column size, four pages. It had to be in the hands of the postoffice officials at 9:50 a. m. the following morning to insure it being delivered to the voters Saturday, for the postoffice was flooded with "wet" literature and the postmaster, with the rest of the city and county administration being decidedly "wet" no loopholes could be overlooked which might be construed to block the delivery of the paper.

Within a few minutes the name "Lenawee County New Era" was decided upon for the paper. With the newspaper in view, C. A. Briggs, the Chicago Tribune cartoonist, had been prevailed upon to draw a cartoon picturing, as the caption read, "a Lenawee Business Scene After May 1," the closing date of the saloons if the county went "dry."

The copy writer got the cartoon and all his copy into the hands of the printers at one of the Adrian newspaper offices by 8

o'clock that evening. Linotype men, make-ups, galley-boys, pressmen were kept on the job all night. At 4:30 in the morning the forms had been locked and at 4:45 the flatbed press was cramming out the first and only edition of the "Lenawee County New Era." At six o'clock the entire edition of something over 10,000 copies had been run off, it being the intention to deliver the paper into the hands of every voter in Adrian and in other extremely "wet" sections of the county which had been perhaps a little neglected with "dry" arguments.

Twenty-five "dry" workers toiled throughout the night addressing wrappers. A few minutes after six the entire edition was loaded into a covered van, so that no early-waking "wets" might scent the coup, and rushed over to the local option headquarters where the dutiful workers were awaiting them. At the appointed hour—9:50, Friday morning—every copy was in the Adrian postoffice and the next morning was in the hands of the voters it was especially desirous to reach. The anti-saloon league and ministers were not made a part of the New Era as the line beneath the paper's title read "issued by the business men backers of a great movement to cure the evils of the open saloon." This was believed to be particularly effective with the rabid "wets," who were known principally because they had the faculty of absenting themselves from anything in which the church had a finger.

The 'dry' ad-writer stayed up all night to see the coup carried off without a hitch.

The following morning he busily engaged himself in the preparation of the day's copy which, according to the plans laid out, consisted of a sentimental talk headed, "For Your Little One's Sake—Vote Yes."

In this ad the feature was the photographic creation of a peach basket heaped high with baby heads—a happy thought—bearing in white lettering: "Lenawee County's Choicest Product." This with a talk on the enticement of the white lights, open door and music of the saloon along with the thought that "where there is no temptation there is no danger," added more grease to the skids towards Lenawee's water wagon. Within the ad were arguments calculated to make the "wettest" father fall into line—and from reports from several sources the desired effect was achieved, for the son of one of the officials of the "wet" organization dropped into the local option headquarters the same evening for a supply of "dry" posters. Then followed the intelligence that the official had resigned from the saloonists' cause.

On Saturday—when the last papers before the election were issued—the final bombardment that the "dry" leaders were somewhat afraid of, was scheduled. It amounted to the acknowledgment that no matter if Lenawee is "dry" those who cared for liquor could keep it in their own homes. It was a rather daring tack for the anti-saloonists to take, because the "wets" had been constantly talking "local option doesn't prohibit," hence the possible come-back was indeed to be dreaded. Yet it meant the

corralling of hundreds of votes, for the saloon element had been preaching to the occasional drinker that he would be "dry" forevermore if the county voted that way. He had been even told that "he couldn't even have alcohol to heat the baby's milk in the morning," so the effect of the ad was instantaneous, for it quoted the Michigan law on the subject, quoted from a test case and conveyed unerringly, convincingly the information that the citizen still possessed the liberty to keep liquor in his own home when entertaining those who were in good faith his guests.

This had the effect of bringing in many German votes. The ad was aimed primarily at the city of Adrian itself, in which the "drys" figured there would probably be a "wet" majority of 1,500 which must be overcome by the county vote. So admirably did the plan work out that the city of Adrian itself produced a "dry" plurality of its own, which paid no uncertain tribute to the worth of the "dry" plan.

In view of the fact that at its last election Lenawee County went overwhelmingly "wet" and that the "wet" campaign manager had never before lost an election, much of the credit for the victory must be given to the reason-why copy.

Publicity stories written by the "dry" copy writer also cut a big figure in the campaign. From five to eight stories, teeming with real news value were handed out each day to the dailies to be run on their own news merits.

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